



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning


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Governor

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Commissioner

MEMORANDUM

To: All Institutions Participating in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

From: Falita S. Flowers,  Nutrition Services Interim Director

Date: May 9, 2014

Subject: Promoting Nutrition in Summer Meals

Legal Authority: USDA Food and Nutrition Service Memorandum SFSP 04-2014

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) was established to ensure that low-income children continue to have access to nutritious meals when school is not in session. To meet this need, sponsors and sites are encouraged to take steps toward improving the nutritional quality and appeal of summer meals served. This memorandum highlights existing policies and procedures that can assist with serving more nutritious meals that appeal to children in the SFSP.

Procurement

Initial solicitations for food service management companies (FSMC) should specify the minimum meal pattern benchmarks that must be met, according to Program regulations. Sponsors can also create solicitations that allow bidders to go beyond those minimum requirements in order to ensure more nutritious and higher quality foods, with broad appeal to participants throughout the summer, will be provided.

Local Foods

Summer is a perfect time to incorporate the bountiful harvest of fresh fruits, vegetables, and other local foods. No matter the size of the summer meal operation, there are many options for finding and sourcing local foods. Some SFSP sponsors choose to purchase foods directly from local farmers, ranchers, and fishermen. In some areas, producers have organized into cooperatives, aggregating their products and combining their marketing efforts. These groups are more likely than a single producer to be able to

fulfill large orders, deliver directly to SFSP sponsors, and to provide some minimal processing. Some, but not all, cooperative efforts to pool products are known as ‘food hubs.’

Mainline distributors and food service management companies are also able to accommodate requests for local products. In many instances, working through distributors to bring local products into summer programs can be easier than sourcing foods directly. In fact, SFSP providers are often surprised to learn that their current distributors are *already* working with local producers. Another tool for purchasing local foods, called Geographic Preference, is particularly useful in formal solicitations where respondents are ranked and scored.

For more information about purchasing local foods using the geographic preference option, please see SFSP 06-2010, *Geographic Preference for the Procurement of Unprocessed Agricultural Products in the Child Nutrition Programs*, November 13, 2009, at http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP_08_CACFP_05_SFSP_06-2010_os.pdf and SFSP 02-2013, *Procurement Geographic Preference Q&As – Part II*, October 9, 2012, at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SP03-2013os.pdf>.

For assistance in procuring local foods, many states have personnel in their departments of agriculture or education who are available to assist. For a complete listing, please see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/state-contacts>. Additionally, another resource, county Cooperative Extension Offices, is available at <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/>.

Resources for School Sponsors

SFAs participating in the SFSP are allowed the flexibility of following the meal pattern requirements of either the school meal programs or the SFSP [7 CFR 225.16(f)(1)]. Prior approval is not required before substituting one meal pattern for the other, only notification to Bright from the Start. This option allows SFAs to seamlessly continue implementation of NSLP meal pattern requirements year-round.

Sponsors may also benefit from the wide variety of nutrition education resources available through Team Nutrition, at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/team-nutrition>. Many of the resources in the Team Nutrition library can be used to reinforce and complement the nutrition messages taught by serving healthful foods in the SFSP.

SFSP Meal Patterns for Children Under Six and for Teens

The quantities of each food component required for the SFSP meal pattern are designed for children between the ages of 6 and 12. However, children of other ages may also be served meals at the SFSP site. The following guidance should be helpful to sponsors or site operators who are concerned that the minimum required amounts of food may not be suitable for some participating children.

Meal Patterns for Children Under Six: The regulations allow Bright from the Start to authorize sponsors to serve food in smaller quantities than are indicated in the SFSP meal pattern to children under six years of age [7 CFR 225.16(f)(2)]. The sponsor must be able to ensure that variations in portion size are in accordance with the age levels of the children served. Sponsors wishing to serve infants under 12 months of age need additional approval from Bright from the Start. In all of these cases, the sponsor must follow the age-appropriate meal pattern requirements under the Child and Adult Care Food Program regulations [7 CFR 226.20]. The form of the food items served should be appropriate to the children’s feeding abilities so they can be easily consumed during the meal service period. For example, fruit should be cut into smaller pieces so that it is easier for younger children to eat.

Meal Patterns for Teens: The regulations also allow children ages 12 to 18 to be served larger portions than the minimum amounts of food specified in the SFSP meal pattern, based on the greater food needs of older children [7 CFR 225.16(d)]. There are no maximum limits on any of the food components in the SFSP meal pattern. To improve the nutrition of participating children, additional foods may be served [7 CFR 225.16(f)(8)]. However, additional foods purchased with Program funds must meet meal pattern requirements, in order for sponsors to receive reimbursement for the meal [SFSP 06-2012, *Serving Additional Foods in the Summer Food Service Program*, November 23, 2011, at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/SFSP06-2012.pdf>].

If you have any questions concerning this memo, please feel free to contact Sonja R. Adams, Policy Administrator at (404) 651-8193.